

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application. By the present amendment, claim 1 is amended to include the subject matter of claim 3 and intervening claim 2, and claims 2, 3, 7 and 9-13 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer as to the subject matter contained therein.

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1. (*Currently Amended*) A method of allocating an internet protocol address to a device connected to a packet-based communication network, comprising:

placing on the network an interrogation in the form of a first control frame from a proxy, said proxy being separate from said device;

receiving at the proxy a response from said device in the form of a second control frame which defines an invalid internet protocol address for said device;

in response to said invalid internet protocol address, sending from the proxy to a separate server a request for an internet protocol address for said device; and

in response to the reception of said second control frame by said proxy, operating said proxy to test potential internet protocol addresses for conflict with existing internet protocol addresses, and obtaining said valid internet protocol address when conflict thereof with existing internet protocol addresses is absent by at least one of steps (a) to (c) as follows:

(a) by means of said request addressed according to a dynamic host communication protocol;

BUSE et al.

Serial No. 09/494,401

Amendment dated May 19, 2004

Response to Office Action dated March 26, 2004

(b) automatic private internet protocol addressing; and

(c) manual entry of the internet protocol address,

wherein said steps (a) to (c) are performed in the order (a), (b) and (c) until said valid internet protocol address is obtained; and

sending from the proxy to said device a third control frame which includes a valid internet protocol address allocated to said device.

Claims 2-13. (*Canceled*).